

Next, Immediately to the right of the crypt is a line of 8 stones. Interestingly, no one is buried at any of the markers. These stones are for veterans who died overseas whose families could not afford to ship their remains back to the U.S.



8) Turn around and walk until you come to a grassy road, and follow that to the right to a distinct grey monument on the left. You might notice that this marker looks a bit different from all the others, feel free to knock on it and confirm your suspicions: this “stone” is actually made of metal. The man buried here, Samuel Ashwell, was many things. He used to be one of many farmers in Rocky Hill which was at one time quite a farming town. He was also a deacon at Rocky Hill Congregational Church, town assessor, and a justice of the peace. Last, but certainly not least, when he passed away in 1919 he was the town’s last surviving veteran of the Civil War.



9) The grassy road intersects the paved cemetery road just ahead, take that to the left to just past the left turn. Up the hill on the left is a small headstone in the ground. This stop is a name you almost certainly know: Cora J. Belden, the same Belden the Rocky Hill library is named after. Many will be surprised to hear that Cora J. Belden was not actually a librarian, though of course

she contributed significantly to the library. Belden was a member of the library’s committee, as well as director and treasurer for the library, and finally the book buyer.



10. Looking directly ahead, there is a small marker for Susan Webber, who has quite a story. Susan Webber was one of few survivors of the sinking of the Titanic. When the ship sank the only thing she had time to grab was a coat to put over her nightgown, and still only just made it. Out of the 14 lifeboats on the Titanic, she was on number 13. She was eventually picked up by the ship Carpathia and taken to New York. Upon arrival she was asked if she needed anything and the woman with nothing but a nightgown and coat asked for only one thing: a comb.



Another story, though not confirmed, is that when she left aboard the Titanic, her brother gave her a pocketknife, which she initially thought was silly and left it in her coat pocket. Then when the lifeboats were being lowered, the ropes of her boat got tangled and stuck. Had her brother not given her the pocketknife she and everyone else in the boat would have been doomed, but she was able to cut the ropes and free the boat with the knife.

END

Center Cemetery Walking Tour Rocky Hill, CT



Information for this tour was gathered from members of the Rocky Hill Historical Society by a scout from BSA Troop 121 as part of his Eagle Scout Project.

Further information on the cemetery and other important monuments is available from the Historical Society

START HERE

To begin the tour of Rocky Hill Center Cemetery, start at the flagpole next to the road. To your right (facing in toward the cemetery) there is a mound of dirt and rocks. That is believed to be the marker for Rocky Hill's own "Tomb of the Unknown Soldier."



1) In the first row of headstones behind the flagpole to your left, there is a worn stone marker. This is the first stop in the tour.



The marker is for the unnamed daughter of Benjamin and Mary Deming, who was the first person buried in the cemetery. Looking closely, you can see this inscribed. She died the day she was born and was never named. She is

also the reason for the cemetery being located where it is, because her parents wanted to be able to see where their daughter was buried at any time. Turning and looking across the street, one can see the house her parents lived in.

2) Moving forward and slightly to the left, near the Warner obelisk (A large brown-stone obelisk) is the marker for Dr. Aaron Hosford, the first medical practitioner in Rocky Hill.



3) In the next row and just a bit to the left is another large monument. This belongs to Calvin Chapin. Chapin was one of the first four ministers at Rocky Hill Congregational Church, and served there for 54 years. He was also a fifer in the Revolutionary War at only 12 years old. Finally, Calvin Chapin started one of the first town libraries in Connecticut, which used to be near the ferry landing.



4) Continuing toward Pratt ST to the left, you will come across a tree with a broken headstone in front of it. The headstone belongs to



Captain Jarvis E. Blinn, a Civil War veteran from Rocky Hill who was killed in the battle of Antietam. He was beloved by his troops and

had been unanimously voted into his position. He died when he was shot through the heart and shouted, "I am a dead man!" before collapsing.

5) Turning to the right you will see what appears to be a table up ahead. This style of marker is called a 'Wolve Stone' and it is believed that stones like it were used to protect bodies from wolves digging them up. Another



story about these stones is that when long church services took place, people would come to the cemetery to have picnics at the stones, using them as tables.

This particular stone belongs to Captain Edward Bolkely, another Civil War veteran.

6) Toward Dividend Road once more, there is a small stone for Capt. William Griswold. He left home in his youth after his parents passed away and lived aboard sailing vessels for much of his life. Eventually, he married a wealthy woman and returned to Rocky Hill, where he started a ship building business. At the start of the Revolutionary War, his company constructed the Minerva, the first ship to be commissioned by the Connecticut navy.



7) Continuing right down the hill, there are two stops in one. First, there is the Robbins crypt. The Robbins were a large and wealthy family here in Rocky Hill, and 20 of their ancestors are laid to rest in this crypt.



Some years ago, a group of teenagers broke into this crypt and vandalized the inside.

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